

Amendments to Claims

In the claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven fabric comprising a support web and a fibrous barrier web consisting of continuous fibers having average diameters of less than 1.0 micrometer, optionally coated with a hydrophobic material, having a hydrohead of between about 145 cm and about 400 cm and a Frazier permeability of between about 0.3 m³/m²-min and about 11.2 m³/m²-min.
2. (Canceled).
3. (Canceled).
4. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1 ~~claims 1 or 2~~, wherein said barrier web fibers have average diameters of less than 0.5 micrometer.
5. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1 ~~claims 1 or 2~~, wherein the barrier layer basis weight is between about 5 and 51 g/m².
6. (Previously Presented) The nonwoven fabric of claim 4, wherein the barrier layer has a basis weight of between about 13 and 51 g/m².
7. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1 ~~claims 1 or 2~~, wherein said barrier web comprises nanofibers of hydrophobic polymer or copolymer.
8. (Original) The nonwoven fabric of claim 7, wherein said hydrophobic polymer or copolymer is a polyolefin, a partially fluorinated polymer or a perfluorinated polymer.
9. (Original) The nonwoven fabric of claim 8, wherein said hydrophobic polymer or copolymer has repeating units derived from ethylene, propylene, butenes, hexenes, octenes, styrenes, 4-methylpentene-1 and combinations thereof.
10. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1 ~~claims 1 or 2~~, wherein said barrier web is rendered hydrophobic by coating with said hydrophobic coating.
11. (Original) The nonwoven fabric of claim 10, wherein said hydrophobic coating is a fluorocarbon coating material.
12. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1 ~~claims 1 or 2~~, wherein the barrier web has a maximum pore size between fibers of no more than about 23 micrometers.
13. (Currently Amended) The nonwoven fabric of claim 1 ~~claims 1 or 2~~, wherein the barrier web has a solids fraction of no less than about 0.03.

14. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven barrier fabric comprising a fibrous barrier web consisting of continuous fibers having average diameters of less than 1.0 micrometer, optionally coated with a hydrophobic material, said fabric having a hydrohead of between about 145 cm and about 400 cm and a Frazier permeability of between about 0.3 m³/m²-min and about 11.2 m³/m²-min and having a relationship between barrier web basis weight, and fabric hydrohead and Frazier permeability described by the formula:

$$B_{wt}(g/m^2) \leq \frac{4000 \cdot c \cdot (1 - 2.3 \cdot c) \cdot \rho_f}{Frazier \cdot Hydrohead^{k(c)}}, \quad \text{wherein}$$

ρ_f is the density of the barrier fibers, c is the solids volume fraction of the barrier web in units of kg/m³,

$$k(c) = 3.58 \cdot c^2 - 1.32 \cdot c + 1.77,$$

Frazier is in units of m³/m²-min, and

Hydrohead is in units of centimeters of water column.

15. (Currently Amended/Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1[[, 2]] or 14, comprising a structure of fine fiber/mSB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
16. (Currently Amended) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1[[, 2]] or 14, comprising a structure of fine fiber /SB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
17. (Currently Amended/Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1[[, 2]] or 14, comprising a structure of mSB/fine fiber/mSB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
18. (Currently Amended /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1[[, 2]] or 14, comprising a structure of fine fiber /MB/SB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
19. (Currently Amended /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1[[, 2]] or 14, comprising a structure of SB/MB/fine fiber/MB/SB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
20. (Currently Amended /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1[[, 2]] or 14, comprising a structure of fine fiber /MB/mSB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.

21. (Currently Amended /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1[[, 2]] or 14, comprising a structure of mSB/MB/fine fiber/MB/mSB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
22. (Currently Amended /Withdrawn) A nonwoven fabric according to one of claims 1[[, 2]] or 14, comprising a structure of SB/MB/fine fiber /SB, wherein fine fiber is a barrier web.
- 23.(Currently Amended) A nonwoven fabric of claim 1 ~~claims 1 or 2~~, wherein said support web comprises fibers having diameters less than about 20 times the barrier web fiber diameters.
- 24.(Original) The nonwoven fabric of claim 23, wherein said support web fibers have diameters less than about 13 micrometers.